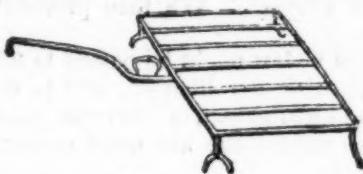


COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"Thus, while the Bank with one hand pays in gold in London, it, with the other hand, prevents gold from getting into the country. This power of prevention is to cease, according to Peel's Bill, next May; so that, in eleven months from this time, whoever takes a country note to a country bank, and demands payment, must be paid, not in Bank of England notes, but in gold. Now, Gentlemen, what will the effect of this be? Why, to lessen the whole quantity of money afloat in the country. Why should it? I may be asked, seeing that for every pound of paper drawn in, there will be a sovereign issued out. This will not be the case; for, there must come from other nations a great many millions in gold to supply the place of the paper. That draft of gold from abroad will lessen the quantity, and raise the price of it there; so that our paper-money must be further and further diminished in quantity in order to keep it up to a par with gold; and, of course, our prices must continue to fall lower and lower, till they come to nearly a level with those of the countries from which the gold comes; and, how low that may be, it would be difficult to say."—*Mr. Cobbett's Speech to the Farmers at Farnham, 1st June, 1822.*

to induce you seriously to reflect on your past conduct, and to repent of the delusion which has prevailed amongst many of you for so many, many years. This, therefore, is the time which I choose for addressing you on the causes of that perilous situation.

I wish not to "rip up old grievances"; but it would be to be criminally negligent not to remind you of your errors, to give the mildest possible term to your want of justice towards me, and towards many others who have endeavoured to accomplish that reform, which would not only have prevented your present sufferings, but which would have been the rock of your safety for the future. If I look back over the transactions of the last thirty years, with a view of pointing out those who have supported the Government in every act, abhorrent to those principles of freedom which our forefathers bequeathed us as the most precious of birthrights, I must in truth declare, that I find you the leader amongst that class. You entertained the opinion, that every struggle for freedom had in it at the bottom an intention to invade your property, or, at least, to pull you down in the scale of society. From the outset of Pitt's anti-jacobin war, you were taught to believe, that all those who wished for a reform of that Parliament, of whose acts you now feel the direst effects, wished to get, somehow or other, into the possession of the property which you enjoyed. You cheerfully armed yourselves; you assumed the military garb; you were proud of being dubbed with the titles of CAPTAIN, LIEUTENANT, and ENSIGN; you caparisoned your horses; you came prancing forth with glittering swords, and well-charged carbines; and for what? against what did you come forth? There was no enemy: there had been no violence offered to any of you: those whom you abused, and were ready to be chopped down, were guilty of merely proposing the adoption of those measures, which would have prevented the

TO THE

FARMERS OF ENGLAND,

*On the Causes of their present Distress,
and on the Remedies for the same.*

Barn-Elm Farm, 5th August, 1829.

MY FRIENDS,

I CALL you friends in a body, because though a very large part of you, or at least, a great many of you, are my open and avowed enemies, I have amongst you many hearty and excellent friends, who have for many years been my firm supporters, in spite of being, in some sort, subjected to a part of the calumny heaped upon myself. You are now in a situation calculated

contracting of that DEBT, and the necessity of that military force, which are now weighing you down to the earth. In 1817, in the month of February, when the reformers of whom I was one, held a meeting on PORTSDOWN HILL, large bodies of you, dressed in your military garb, and mounted on your horses with drawn swords in your hands, and carbines fixed in your holsters, were drawn up in the valley below, to watch our movements, and to be *ready to act*, if thought necessary. You were furnished with powder and ball, and one of your body, on the evening of that day, showed me, and gave me, one of the balls at the inn at HORNEDEAN.

Now what was the horrible sin in the commission of which we were engaged? What was the cause of your thus sallying forth against us, armed with deadly weapons? On what ground was it that you armed yourselves against us, and were ready to destroy us, if ordered? What had we done, what had we said? For what did we meet together, and for what did we pray? A law was just then passing to authorize the Secretaries of State to shut Englishmen up at their pleasure, upon their bare suspicion of treasonable designs; and great numbers were so shut up, some of whom died in prison, all of whom were totally ruined, and none of whom were ever brought to trial, or confronted with their accusers. And you were assembled on PURBROOK HEATH to watch our movements, and, if ordered, to employ your deadly weapons upon us.

Well then, now let us see what was our offence. We assembled on that lofty down at a spot more than a mile from any house; we there chose a chairman; we agreed to a petition to the Parliament, we signed it upon the spot, and we sent it off from that spot to the House of Commons. And now, what did we pray for in that petition? We began thus: "Your petitioners, yielding to no part of his Majesty's subjects in anxiety for the preservation of the tranquillity of the country, beg leave to express their hope that they shall not meet with a rebuke, but with a kind reception and patient hearing from your

" Honourable House, while they approach your Honourable House with a respectful statement of their rights, their wrongs, their apprehensions, and their prayers." We then proceeded to pray:

1. That no law might be passed to take from us our liberties, and to shut us up in prison, or otherwise punish us without due and usual course of law.
2. We prayed for the abolition of all sinecures, and of all pensions and grants not fully merited by well-known and public services.
3. With regard to salaries, we prayed that as these had been augmented by law, expressly on account of the lowering in the value of money, they might now, when money was increased in value, be reduced in proportion to that change in the value of money.
4. We prayed, that as the funded debt had been contracted in money of low value, the rate of interest on that debt might be reduced, so as to prevent the utter ruin of the payers of the taxes; the very words of the prayer were these:—"Therefore your petitioners most humbly pray, that the rate of interest on the funded debt may be immediately reduced in such degree, that the fruit of the whole of the productive labour of the country may no longer be swallowed up by the dealers in bank paper; or, to adopt the words of a petition received by the House of Commons from the town of Leicester, at the time of the SOUTH SEA BUBBLE, your petitioners most humbly implore your Honourable House, 'That the last drop of the nation's blood may not be poured out to be licked up by the cannibals of CHANGE ALLEY'."
5. We prayed, relative to the standing army, "Your petitioners beg leave to be permitted to assure your Honourable House, that your Honourable House can do nothing more consoling to their

"hearts, nothing more cheering to
"their hopes, than the measures
"which they trust your Honour-
"able House will speedily adopt
"for greatly reducing that enor-
"mous and expensive establish-
"ment, which seems to say, that
"the Government cannot safely
"confide in the people, and which,
"by assuming the air of menace,
"inevitably tends to excite resent-
"ment, and to produce violence,
"confusion, and bloodshed."

6. We prayed that a reform of the Commons' House of Parliament might be adopted, "upon the principles of a Bill presented to the House of Lords by the late Duke of Richmond, more than thirty years ago, which Bill proposed *Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage.*"

Such were the prayers of a petition, signed on PORTSDOWN HILL, on the 10th February, 1817, at a meeting of which JOHN GOLDSMITH, a farmer at HAMBLEDON, was the Chairman. Now, then, look at these prayers, and reflect, that a large body of you were armed with drawn swords and loaded carbines to be *ready to act*, if ordered, against the persons who put up these prayers. The whole of the petition is to be found in the Register of the 15th February, 1817. Go, my friends, look at the empty bays in your barns; look at your naked rick-yards, and those racks of bones your rick steddles; look at the empty bins and sacks in your granaries; and oh! look at the black account with your rag-rook! Look at all these; and then, once again, look at the prayers of those for whom you had ready drawn swords, and carbines loaded with powder and ball!

What would you now give if those prayers had then been listened to and acted upon? You would, I speak literally, gladly give your ears. The very measures prayed for by that petition, are now prayed for by every man of you. They would now come too late to prevent your degradation; but if immediately adopted, they might prevent your utter ruin: they could not remount you

on your caparisoned horses, and give you port wine to drink like water, or, as was sometimes the case, claret mixed with brandy; but they would keep a whole shirt on your backs, and a decent coat for Sundays; and these you will not have, unless measures consonant with the prayers of that petition be speedily adopted. Can you think of these things? Can you think of your conduct for many, many years, without blushing for that conduct? If you can, I talk to you in vain: if you cannot, listen now to what I have to say with regard to the cause of your present distress and approaching ruin.

You have always persuaded yourselves, that taxation has not been the cause of your losses and distress. It is curious, however, that you complain most bitterly of the weight of the *poor-rates*, though these are not, counting only that which is given to the poor, above a *twelfth* part as great as the rest of the taxes. You can estimate the weight of the poor-rates, because you see them; because the overseer comes immediately to you, and because you count the money into his hand. As to the rest of the taxes, you appear to think nothing of them; because, except for the horse, the dog, and the windows, the tax-gatherer does not happen to come to you and receive the money from your hands; but if you were to have the malt tax, the beer tax, the spirit tax, the wine tax, the tax on the iron, leather, soap, candles, sugar, tea, stamps, and taxes on all other things; if you were to have all these taxes collected from you by the tax-gatherer; and if he were to come and demand from you all these taxes one by one, and in addition the tax for every brick and tile that you use, and every bit of deal board, and the tax for every thing you buy at an auction, and the tax on your lease, and on the gown and every rag of cotton that your family wears; and if you were to perceive, as you ought to perceive, that in your tradesmen's bills, and your labourers' wages, you, in fact, pay a share of their taxes too: if you were to perceive all this, which you would do if the tax-gatherer were to come to you your-

self for the money, you would find that those poor-rates, of which you think so much, and about which you make such a clamour, are comparatively a contemptible trifle. If you were to perceive all this, you would cease to clamour for a change in the poor laws, and would cry aloud for a change in the taxing laws.

For the want of having this just view of the matter, which is kept from your sight by a round-about and artful mode of collecting the taxes, you have never been able to persuade yourselves, *that the taxes were the cause of your ruin.* Besides this, you have been deceived by the coincidence of high taxes and high prices; and when your fall came, you perceived it only in the *fall of prices.* You *saw* the fall of prices: you felt the diminution of the quantity in your purses; but you did not see how it was that the purse was emptied quicker than formerly. Bad times, low price, flat markets; and the loftier amongst you talked of the *depression of price,* of the *depression of agriculture,* and of the *want of remunerating prices.* You never talked of high taxation; and, indeed, the main part of you never wished for low taxation. You had prospered while it was high; and it has happened to me to hear scores of you say, that you did not care how high taxes were, *so that the prices were high;* and when you were told that foreign trade must be ruined, and that gold would not stay in the country with high prices, you either despised the information, or abused the informer. Hence all the schemes of Mr. WEBB HALL; all the endless nonsense of agricultural committees at HENDERSON'S HOTEL, and the perfectly eternal nonsense of The Farmer's Journal about "*remunerating prices.*" Why, a *remunerating* price may be *low* as well as *high:* all depends upon the *outgoings* of the farmer; but this you appear never to have seen. What you have called *remunerating* prices could not have continued to exist after the war, without the total ruin of all foreign trade, without the total banishment of gold from the country; or without the guinea selling for fifty shillings; with-

out two prices in the market, which always supposes a total overthrow of the state. To prevent this latter revolution, it was absolutely necessary to return to gold. The Government did perfectly right in returning to gold; for the Ministers and Parliament were bound by every tie by which men can be bound to prevent an overthrow of the state, which overthrow, you will please to observe, would, not so much from choice as from necessity, have made the most numerous class the masters of you and your property.

But while it was the duty, the sacred duty, of the Government to return to gold, it was not less its duty *to return to low taxes;* and the reason for doing this was so plain, was so just, was so absolutely necessary, that if you had done your duty; if you had joined us in those prayers, to stifle which you were armed, *voluntarily* armed with swords, pistols, and carbines, to *low taxes the Government would have returned:* it would have made an equitable adjustment upon the principles laid down in the Portsdown Petition, and since laid down more explicitly in the Norfolk Petition: never would there have been a Power-of-imprisonment Bill in 1817; never would the yeomanry cavalry have killed or wounded hundreds of reformers in Manchester, in 1819; never would there have been a Peel's Bill in 1819; never a Small-note Bill in 1822; never a Robinson prosperity in 1825; never a panic in that year, and in 1826; never a Small-note Bill in the latter year; and never, never, that fearful state of things in which you now are. Empty rick-yards and granaries, balances to the banker unpaid, and wheat falling in price, though there is not a handful in your hands.

You kept bellowing for high prices, prices, which, with gold payments, *were impossible:* hence the project of corn bills; hence, as I said before, the cry for remunerating prices, which, with high taxes and gold payments, were impossible; and hence the taxes have all been continued, and the natural result is your ruin. You have always been talking of protecting duties: this was the incessant cry of Mr. WEBB HALL. The present

protecting corn laws go very far in keeping corn out of the country. They, at this moment, impose a duty on foreign corn not far from being equal to the whole original price of that corn; and yet it is selling on an average at half the price that it sold for before there was any Corn Bill at all; and this, too, at a time when there is scarcely an old corn rick to be seen in a hundred miles. One would have thought that this would have been sufficient to convince you, that no law could give you remunerating prices. But nothing has produced conviction in your minds: you now seem as mad for high prices as at any former period: I hear not of a single man of you who has spoken out upon the subject of high taxes; and I discover no disposition in you to call for that reform which is the only thing that can save you and your children from destruction, or, at least, from great degradation. Strange infatuation! But thus it always has been: no nation ever was ruined but by the follies or faults of its people.

I have lately read, with great pleasure and great admiration, the evidence of Mr. HENRY BOYCE, of WALDERSHARE, in the county of KENT, given last year, before a Committee of the House of Commons. Somebody has told me (I forget whom) that this Mr. BOYCE is the father-in-law of young JOHN ELMAN, of LEWES, in SUSSEX. I should like to know how this is; because this Mr. ELMAN very nearly raised a row against me at a public dinner at Lewes, because I had severely reprobated the conduct of some SUSSEX overseers, who had tied *bells* on upon labourers that were at work for the parish, in order that, by the silence of the bell, they might know when the labourer was standing still instead of being at work. Mr. BOYCE, whose humane sentiments, and whose sensible observations to the Committee, do him the greatest honour, expresses his sorrow at seeing labourers hooked on to carts and wheelbarrows, drawing stones to the road, and thus degraded in their own estimation, and that of their beholders. If this gave pain to Mr. BOYCE, what must have been his feelings at seeing the

same labourers hung with bells, like horses; what must have been his feelings at this wanton infliction of additional degradation! Mr. BOYCE told the COMMITTEE, that, while the men were thus employed upon the roads, their *labour was wanted on the farms*; and that there were none too many of them, if the farmer could afford to pay them; but that with the present tithes, rates, and taxes, the farmer could not afford to employ them. It is strange that you should not see that this want of money arises almost wholly from the taxes. You pay the poor men four or five or six shillings a week for doing nothing that is of any use to you: they would earn twelve shillings for doing things useful to you; they would render you a service equal to the twelve shillings; and thus save you entirely the four or five or six shillings, which you pay them for doing nothing; but you cannot give them the twelve shillings, because the taxes do not leave the money in your pockets. This is the state of the case; and yet you never apply for a reduction of the taxes, but are always hankering after high price, which, for the fiftieth time, I tell you, is impossible, without driving the last piece of gold out of the country; or without bringing forth assignats and two prices in the market, which, in other words, is the overthrow of the state.

Now as to the *immediate* cause of the extreme distress that is now prevalent amongst you, it is the *withdrawing of the one-pound notes*; and this cause you perceive: you have, at last, got a glimpse at the causes of ruin; and you owe this to the *nearness* of the cause to the effect, and to the very visible operation of that cause. In 1822, the small-notes were not withdrawn: their quantity was diminished; there were less of them: discounts were difficult, because the bankers were preparing for the abolition of the one-pound notes. But the notes were still circulating; they were not actually drawn in by law: five-pound notes had still ones to be exchanged by: you did not see the small notes actually disappear. Now you see all about the matter: you see no more

ones circulating except by stealth, or in violation of law: you see one banker putting about another's notes; but he tells you that he cannot renew your bill by his fives, lest the fives should come to him for gold. If you have a five-pound note you must carry it to the bank for change; and if it be of the issue of a bank at another town, you must give threepence or sixpence in the pound for turning the note into gold; and while you have these things before your eyes, you have the banker's notice, you have his *broad hint*, to be so good as to pay, in as little time as possible, *your balance!* Thus you have the whole thing directly before your eyes: you see the cause of the "scarcity of money," as it is called; and now you, who were once gay *volunteers* on your caparisoned horses, with shining swords, and with pouches well stored with powder and bullets, to keep down "Jacobins and Levellers," find that you have got a leveller, a *real leveler*, that is about to bring you all down to one and the same state of ruin. I hear sad stories of you; that you do not confine yourselves to humble and decorous language such as we reformers made use of in addressing the Parliament; that some of you swear like *troopers*, not against *Jacobins and Levellers*, but against those for petitioning whom you were prepared to mow us down. From what I hear, and from what I see in the columns of *The Farmer's Journal*, you are perfectly outrageous against the *Parliament* for separating *without doing any thing for you!* And more especially are you enraged that the House of Commons should have so contrived it, as not to *make a house*, when Sir something VIVIAN was to bring forward a motion relative to the *distresses of the country*. But, in the first place, though this mode of getting rid of the question was contemptible enough, you will have, I hope, the justice to recollect that it was adopted by a Parliament which you armed to prevent from being reformed; and what, in the next place, did you wish the *Parliament to do for you?* It had given you "*protecting duties*" enough, God knows. Would you have had it pass a law to rebuild the corn-ricks, which the

bankers had taken away for the payment of their balances? Would you have had it pass a law to compel the woolstaplers to give you half-a-crown a pound for your wool, instead of from four-pence to seven-pence? Would you have had it pass a law to compel those hard-hearted dogs, the butchers, to give you a shilling a pound for mutton instead of a groat? What was the Parliament to do for you, then? Was it to repeal the Small-note Bill, send forth assignats, give you paper to pay your taxes in, and make the King and the army, and all the fine lord and pretty lady-pensioner and sinecure people, live out of depreciated money, while you carried home the gold to put into your chests? What then, I say, was the Parliament to do for you? And what were VIVIAN and his "*motion*" to do more than to produce just such a parcel of talk as was afterwards produced upon the presenting of the Birmingham Petition, which talk brought forth from the great oracle, Dr. BARING, an opinion, that "the nation *was like* a man in the "dark, and that it ought to stand still, "till the light came"? The Doctor told us, besides, that we could not have two campaigns of a war, without coming back to Bank-restriction; and the great Lawyer BROUHAM was *delighted* at this discovery, because this would *insure us against war*: just upon the same principle that the old gentleman rejoiced at the beggary of his son, because it would prevent him from going to the play! What could VIVIAN and his motion have done more than have brought from the great PEEL a statement of *eight distinct causes* of the distress of which the Small-note Bill, and your consequent paying in of balances was not one; and of which the shifting of manufacturing from Spitalfields to Manchester; the great improvements in machinery; the war in the East of Europe; the unsettled state of South America, and the American Tariff, were *five*: though it was, I dare say, abundantly difficult for you to perceive how the devil these causes could have led to *your distress*, could have produced *your inability* to pay up *your balances*. There was, indeed,

WILMOT HORTON, who found out a cause in the *surplus population* of the country; but yet he could not discover, for the life of him, how the abolition of the one-pound notes could affect the wages of the labourer! There was the great Huskisson, to be sure, who had comfort in store for you; for he said, that, if we had but the resolution to proceed with his system of *free trade*, the country would be soon more prosperous than ever, and that the passing cloud would blow over, never to return!

What more, then, could the Parliament have done for you, if it had continued to sit for a month? Yes, it might have done more for you: it might have passed Acts to effect the six objects prayed for in our petition signed on Portsdown Hill. It might have reduced the army to the state at which it was before the last war; it might have abolished the Six Acts; it might have abolished sinecures, pensions, and grants; it might have reduced salaries to the old standard; it might have reduced the interest of the Debt, and it might have reformed the Parliament: it might have done all these things; and if you had prayed it to do these things; if you had had the spirit to petition it to do these things; if you had distinctly asked it to do these things for you, and if it had separated without doing them, and without attentively hearing you, and amply discussing the merits of your case, you would have been fully justified, even in the unmeasured rage which you now express against it for its inattention to your interests. But you suffer a whole session to pass: you say not a word: you hear merchants and manufacturers complain: you see their petitions received, and give rise to discussion; but, with your heads and horns within your shells, you peep out; and while others push forward, you stir not, and say not a word. It is not thus that men obtain redress: it is not thus they excite attention: it is not thus that they save themselves from ruin.

The truth is, that you are watching and waiting for a repeal of the *Small-note Bill*: you wanted the paper-money again, and those high prices which are

the beloved of your souls. Until the 5th of April came, you never believed that the bill would be enforced: until the very moment of execution you expected a reprieve. Even after the execution came, you entertained hopes as long as the Parliament was sitting; and it was not till you saw it actually preparing to separate, that you began to utter your discontent,

At last, however, the thing is done: you will see no more small notes after the present rubbish have totally disappeared; you will see the five-pound notes gradually follow the ones; you will see the London five-pound notes prudently follow those of the country; and you will see prices return, on an average of seasons, to much about what they were before the year 1793; that is to say, before there were any five-pound notes in England. Long before this, however, you will all, as *farmers*, be totally ruined. If you have fortunes to lose, and if your land be not your own, you will lose the fortunes gradually: if the land be your own, you may, by extreme frugality, make shift to live; but not in a state much above that of the common day labourer. All your corn stacks are gone; your barns are empty; your fields in bad culture; your stock insufficient, and scarcely any part of it of sufficient age; your wool on your hands is worth next to nothing; or if sold, sold for a song; you have no stores of any thing; your Lady-day rent is half unpaid; your crop bespoken by the banker, or due to the landlord and parson before it be cut; you must thrash it instantly out, and force it into the market, to give profit to the monopolizing jobbers; to pay for your harvest work you must drive your hogs to market, or make your crops over, standing, or in the straw, to the landlord or banker; and a third part of you will be unable to fallow, and manure, and sow your fields for the next year.

This, with very little exaggeration, with very little high colouring, is the real state of more than one-half of you; and if you were put upon your oaths, you would not deny the facts. As to forbearance from your landlords, how

are they to live unless you pay their rents? They have families to keep as well as you, and pretty expensive ones too; and they cannot retrench so easily as you can. You have one great advantage over all the rest of mankind; that is, you can retrench without the world perceiving it much: you can look up to the rack, and cut a bit of bacon, instead of having a butcher's boy come galloping up to your door; and there is, when one comes to the trial, not only good living, but an infinite variety in bacon. There is the hock nicely boiled, cold, for breakfast and supper; there is the back to boil with the *cabbage* (it "yeats like unto marrow" when boiled *with* the bacon) for dinner; there is the cushion-piece for Sunday's dinner, or for dinner to a friend, and to put by as a treat for droppers-in. Now and then a sheep, an old lady unfit for the butchers, will give something in the way of suet, besides a regale of fresh meat. The lamb, the veal, the beef, are for the tax-eaters. The tea slops (infernally expensive both in money and time) are easily supplanted by the brown jug. *Nobody sees* you. The *revolution* takes place without attracting the notice of a mob. Butter and cheese making, and rearing and feeding fowls, are, when one comes to the trial, a great deal pleasanter than squalling over an oblong chest, standing upon legs, with strings and wires in it, and give a much finer complexion. *Squalling*, like *scolding*, is injurious to the lungs: preach the former to your daughters, and the latter to your wife. As to the sons, make a mistake, and kill the pointers for sheep-biting dogs; and keep their horses without oats, and they will soon be glad to turn them into money. Discover, as soon as possible, that smock-frocks keep off the dirt, and are very warm at the same time; and you will find, if you try it, that holding plough now and then, coming on by degrees, will be vastly beneficial to your health; for all physicians recommend being out in the fields *on fresh-moved ground*. Instead of an "*occasional gardener*" to trim up the walks, and to hoe, your wife will be as happy as a queen, and your daughters as princesses,

to spuddle about now and then, and have little flower gardens, and herb beds. In short, you will soon accommodate yourself to the change of circumstances: you will jog to market on the old breeding mare, with a foal by her side; will tie her head to the rack, to prevent her from stealing the innkeeper's hay; and you will jog home again "as sober as a judge," instead of coming tumbling in at midnight, roaring like a bully, and "as drunk as a lord." The two-pence which you have given to the hostler for the standing of the old mare, will be the whole of your day's expences, except in cases where the tranquillity of your mind has been disturbed by the tribute, which may be demanded of you for the liberty to ride along a Macadamized road, which has been made only in consequence of the labour which has been subtracted from your fields in order to gratify the luxurious propensity of the tax-eaters.

And the beauty of this is, that you will accomplish it unseen by all the world. The *swells* from the towns, the bankers' clerks, and other such blades, will become scarce from the same cause; and if sentimental allurements attract them, you have only to break all the decanters to put theirsincerity to the test, taking care at the same time, not to put *too much malt into the beer*: this is all done so quietly, so snugly, so unobserved by the rest of the world, that you will be ready to exclaim with Mr. JEFFERSON, the late President of America, that "IF "GOD EVER HAD a chosen people, "that people certainly consisted of the "cultivators of the land;" an expression which, upon one occasion, *lost him his election*, and which, therefore, he took care to *explain away* in the course of four years, at the end of which time he again encountered, and beat, his antagonist.

Compared with you, unhappy indeed is your landlord! He cannot come to the bacon rack: he, poor man, has a wife as well as you; but she must still have the carriage to ride in; she cannot lop off a footman, or half a dozen dishes; she does not *see*, as yours does, the emptiness of the purse: if she happen

to know that her loaf is made of wheat, what cares she about the price of the bushel; she never sees the overseer, and knows nothing about the dismal Saturday night. To talk to her about the price of corn and wool having an influence on the brocades and the ices in which she deals, would be just the same as talking to WILMOT HORTON about the Small-note Bill affecting the wages of the labouring man! In short, she will have what she has been accustomed to have; and if she have it not, she will say that she is *an injured woman*. Her husband, poor man, will never be able to persuade her, that it is either just or necessary that her expenses should be diminished, while those of the loan-monger or the stock-jobber are rather increasing than any thing else. So that forbearance from the landlord ought not to have this name: it ought to be called, taking from the landlord to put into your own pocket; bringing *him down*, in order to avoid coming down yourself. You may find some difficulty; you who live at a distance from all other houses, and who generally have rational people to deal with, and people, too, who know how every penny comes and goes. What, then, is the landlord to do? What difficulties has he not to encounter?

No: there is no contrivance by which you can avoid this coming down, which must either be *voluntary* or *forced*, and the first is by far the best of the two. Hanker not, I beseech you, after the accursed one-pound notes: they have reduced the minister to the *simple choice of bringing you down; or overthrowing the state*. Hope for the wretched things no more; get a reduction of taxes; get an *equitable adjustment* if you can; but, at any rate, resolve to prepare for the worst. Your fathers or grandfathers, from whose savings you were, in general, enabled to become what you are, did very well without bank notes, discounted bills, checks, and the devil knows what. Very few of them ever knew what the words funds, and omnium, and loans meant. When they had saved money, they kept it in gold, or they lent it on land. These accursed things were not

wanted: the nation was rich, and great, and powerful without them. It never was so low in the estimation of the nations of the earth as it is now. Your mothers and grandmothers were industrious, frugal, attentive to their household affairs, and did not know the meaning of the words NOVEL and PIANO; and, though I do not *blame* the farmers' wives and daughters of the present day, who have been unnaturally sublimated by this showy, tricky, and false system of paper money, I do most sincerely rejoice in believing, that the time is not far distant when the English farm-houses will again contain a race of inhabitants something like that which filled them fifty years ago; and in the indulgence of this hope, I am animated by feelings of benevolence the most sincere.

But while I say this, I by no means agree with the DUKE of WELLINGTON, that you ought to be brought down *while the tax-eaters remain as they are*, and even while they are to be raised higher up. All ranks, except the king and the nobles, have been raised above their due rank in society. Even the wretched labourers and their families, though with half a belly full of victuals, are tricked out in those worthless fineries which serve only to fill them with silly and ambitious notions; only to blast them with "the curse of Scotland," poverty and pride, which, of all the curses relating to this world, is the greatest. As far as labouring men are concerned, rags, indeed, are the order of the day; for they cannot wear rotten cottons; but, the females even of labourer's families are tricked out in fineries, while they are half starved; so that when you meet a father and daughter, a stranger would take one for a lady and the other for a beggar. This is odious: this is ruinous, to morals, as well as to every thing else which ought to be dear to a family.

We have been living, for several years, in a false system: false money, false credit, false appearances in all the walks of life, false agriculture, false commerce, false manufactures. We have been living in a system of anticipation; every one has gone before his

means; the nation in a body has anticipated its means; a group of loan mongers, and stock shufflers, have wriggled it into a debt which it never can pay, and to this band of crafty and persevering Quakers and Jews, the property of the whole of the community is mortgaged. Paper money has been the grand vehicle of the anticipations; the small notes have been the basis of the paper money; and the government, by destroying these, has at once brought the debtors in contact with the creditors: the whole of the false system is about to explode; and, I should be a hypocrite if I did not declare that I should see the explosion with delight.

I am, my friends,
Your most obedient Servant,
WM. COBBETT.

MR. OTWAY CAVE.

I INSERT, with great pleasure, the Speech of Mr. Otway Cave, at a Reform Dinner at Leicester, on the day under-named; and am happy to perceive, that he backs the Radical Society in London, in all its principles.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

DINNER AT LEICESTER.

On Tuesday, the 4th instant, the friends to Parliamentary Reform dined together at the Bell Hotel, Leicester, R. O. CAVE, Esq., M. P., in the Chair. About sixty highly respectable gentlemen sat down to the tables, which were well filled with choice and substantial fare. As soon as the cloth was drawn, the Chairman gave, "The King, and "may he never forget that he holds the "Crown in trust for the benefit of the "People." Song, "The King and Old England for ever."—"The people, the only source of legitimate power." Song, "The Banners of Blue."

The CHAIRMAN, in proposing the next toast,—“Reform in the Commons” “House of Parliament, and a full, fair, “and free representation of the people,” observed, after the way in which the toast had been proposed on the last occasion, however unable he was to express his sentiments now, the meeting would believe him sincere in proposing it once more; and however timid he might be for want of ability in addressing them, he felt bold to meet so large a body of his constituents, as he was not conscious of having done a single thing to forfeit their good opinion by his conduct in the House of Commons. It also afforded him great pleasure to appear amongst them to give some account of his stewardship, and he thought it would be a most excellent measure, if every representative were to meet his constituents once a year, to point out to them what had been done during the sessions of Parliament, and to ask their advice and guidance for the future. He congratulated them on the rising spirit of Reform, not only in Leicester, but throughout the country; and though there were some who urged that the present was not the time for advocating such principles; yet he considered that it was seasonable at all times, and on every occasion, to try and effect a practical good. No exertions would be thrown away in the cause, else had the patriot and the martyr died in vain. They had got rid of that bigoted aristocratical question, Catholic Emancipation, which had so long agitated the country, and was used as a stalking horse, to keep from the sight of the people, those grievous abuses which tended to degrade and debase them. The Catholic Question had been disposed of, and the road was now open to amendment and reform; and when he considered the financial and commercial distresses of the country, and the avowed inability of Ministers to grapple with the difficulty, he felt convinced that a favourable result to the cause must be produced. He called upon his constituents to use their best exertions, and though he would not lay down to them any precise form for their adoption, yet

he considered there were three things which ought to be embraced :—first, extension of suffrage ; second, a shorter duration of Parliaments ; and, third, the vote by ballot. Either one of these would go very far in securing the blessings of a good government. The forty-shilling freeholders in Ireland, previous to their being sacrificed, displayed something like an approach to universal suffrage, and it was found impossible to bribe or to deceive them. France, with its bad system of representation, had adopted the voting by ballot, and thus removing the obnoxious influence of superior power between the tyrant and the slave—between the rich and the poor—and he firmly believed that it had saved that country from the miseries of a second revolution. But what he proposed was no French theory, for it had received the sanction, and was sanctified by the blood, of Britons—Hampden, Sydney, Hazelrick, and others ; and with such precedents their opponents ought to prove the measure deficient in justice, before they rejected or condemned it. What had been done during the last Session of Parliament ? The removing Catholic disabilities was certainly a great point gained, but it was followed by a base, cowardly, and illegal act, the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders. Through those very men Ministers had carried the question of Emancipation, and then deprived them of their rights. But the evil was prospective, and would serve as a precedent for future measures. Who now could talk about vested rights, and claim the privilege of non-resident freeholders, when men, having committed no crime, having no ban upon their names, were punished by the forfeiture of the elective franchise ? Who could boast of the enjoyment of civil rights, whilst Ministers were enabled to appeal to such a precedent ? He next came to the base jugglery of expelling Mr. O'Connell from his seat, and it certainly presented a lamentable picture of a House of Commons that Mr. O'Connell should suffer expulsion for refusing to take an oath, which that House had only a few weeks before repealed ; and whilst other great

questions were waiting for discussion, the legislative body was debating on the words of an Act which it was not able to render comprehensible even to itself. He next came to Mr. Hume's division on the Corn Laws, and called the attention of the meeting to the fact, that only twelve members voted in favour of the motion. Another instance was, the division on his own resolution respecting the emancipation of negro children, in which he had chiefly adhered to the words of that great commentator of the law, Blackstone. His arguments were not met either by lawyer or politician in the House, yet forty-five members had voted that Blackstone was ignorant of British law. Indeed, there was no hope that Government would change its measures, unless there was a strong expression of feeling from the whole country at large ; for how could they expect redress to be spontaneously offered by men who had declared that they yielded to Catholic Emancipation, not as a measure of justice to seven millions of their fellow-subjects, but because they could withhold it no longer, and if they could, they would have done so ; but worse than this, after they had carried the question, by a most unconstitutional act, they directed the thunder and lightning of the legislature against one single man, whom they had declared to be free. He would next advert to the cowardly-blood-stained crime committed at Terceira, which, though justified by Ministers, made every honest Englishman hold down his head with shame and regret. On the opposition-side of the House there had been intrigue and coquetry for office, which, however much to be regretted, he trusted would end in good ; for he hoped that when the Whigs had attained their ends, they would once more return to consult the prosperity of the people. He lamented that men of talent should depart from the rigid principles of integrity, as it was calculated to lower public men in the eyes of disinterested persons. From all these circumstances, what inferences were they to draw from the conduct of Government, or Parliament, for they were nearly one and the same thing. Once in every

twenty or thirty years, after every shuffle had been made to impede and prevent, some measure was extorted from them by necessity ; and this proved, that till the people would take their affairs in their own hands, there would be no firm, steady course of good government. The question they were now to consider was—what would be the best mode to obtain reform ? and he would answer it could only be obtained by the strong force of public opinion, combined with circumstances. Questions of reform should be agitated in detail ; and then, having successfully levelled the outworks, and shaken the tower, of corruption to its very base, it would tumble to the ground of its own accord. Every subject of reform should be taken and attacked separately. They should contend for reforms in the law—for reforms in the church—for reforms in corporations, and for reforms in the colonies. The delays of the law ought to be obviated. The expense reduced ; its meaning so clear and intelligible as not to admit of being distorted ; and it should no longer be a reed to the poor, and a two-edged sword in the hands of the rich. He would point attention to the church, particularly of Ireland, where there existed a perfect anomaly. The revenues were supplied by men professing another religion ; and in some places there were ministers, but, literally and truly, no congregation at all. Let the meeting examine the manners and conduct of the clergy of England, particularly the high dignitaries in the House of Lords. The one had got up petitions, and the others made speeches in the House of Lords, to prevent the shackles of restraint being removed from the civil rights of their fellow-countrymen. Nay, more, the Duke of Wellington, a soldier who had passed his early years in the tented field, and had grown grey in victory, read a lesson of humanity and religion to the bench of Bishops, who ought to have been foremost in recommending conciliation, peace, and good-will to all men. The Duke declared that he would willingly sacrifice his life to save one month of civil warfare. But the men who were robed in the ecclesiastical rai-

ment, and whose great master had taught them, “ If thou art smitten on one side, turn the other also,” these cried out to blow the trumpet of civil warfare in their native land ; and instead of raising their prayers for discord to cease, they uttered blasphemous aspirations for vengeance on the Catholics. They trampled on their sacred obligations, they perverted the doctrines of the altar, to secure their own aggrandisement and personal privileges. He felt convinced that the merciless conduct of the Orange faction in Ireland would recoil upon that body, and he trusted that the laws would be impartially enforced upon all. The war with France undertaken against the revolution, had inflicted a double evil, for it had involved the nation in debt, and been the means of inventing a paper money system ; but even these must contribute, in the end, to bring about reform. Another operating cause would proceed from the Catholics ; for as the Catholic religion had been called the religion of slaves, he trusted that the Catholics would show that it was a religion of liberty, and make common cause with the Protestants in effecting Parliamentary Reform. He looked upon Mr. O’Connell (who had been a second time returned for Clare), as an honest, bold, powerful, and eloquent co-operator in the cause. There was yet another instrument working for general good, which was more powerful than all—he meant the spread of education, which was enlightening the mind of man, and elucidating his natural right. The schoolmaster had already taught that English Protestants never could be free whilst Irish Catholics remained as slaves. The principles of liberty were triumphing in France, in South America, in North America, and it was that liberty which was founded in religion, reason, and justice. Many nations were still under despotic rule ; and it showed this great moral lesson, that freedom was not to be gained in a day ; it was a mistress not to be lightly won, or cheaply purchased. The Portuguese and Spanish refugees in this country, who had fled from the tyranny of a Don Miguel and a Ferdinand, were living pictures

of this truth, and it was not lost upon the world. It showed them, that if they wished to have free institutions, they must place them beyond the reach of danger. The sword of justice was not to be held by feeble hands, who trifled with its awful responsibility. If the Upas tree of corruption was to be destroyed, they must advance firmly and boldly with the axe, and not yield to fear or trembling when they come within the reach of its baneful and deadly influences. Freedom would be cheap if bought with blood, and he was determined to give his humble, though cordial, support, to whatever would promote its purpose. Let them once get the wedge of reform entered, and he trusted to see it driven home to the perfect satisfaction of the people of England. But patriotism, like charity, ought to begin at home ; he would therefore impress the sentiment upon their minds, “ May the friends of Radical Reform radically reform themselves.” In their own borough, there was much to be done, and though at the expense of individual sacrifices ; yet he was certain that local despotism could not exist much longer. The ground had been cut from under the feet of the despots in the House of Commons. He was much astonished when he beheld a high-spirited population, possessing all the elements of strength, suffering a local oligarchy to trample upon them. Their meetings would be in vain, their applause would be in vain, their speeches would be in vain, if they did not show they were really in earnest as to a reform in their Local Parliament, for it was the very *beau ideal* of a self-constituted authority. The Corporation expended their funds in returning members to the House of Commons, for the purpose of keeping their fellow-townsmen in slavery ; he would, therefore, recommend the establishment of a Club, or Committee, resembling the Catholic Association, to take advantage of every favourable opportunity for working reform. He should always be happy to render his services as long as they were found available ; but if he was detected in betraying his trust, or

refusing to answer the questions which were put to him respecting his political conduct, then he had no hesitation in saying, they had a right to look upon him as a traitor to the cause of the people. He again exhorted them to form a Club to act as a check upon the local government, and to protect the interests of the town. He had visited the Club of Working Mechanics, and was much struck with the sound reasoning and good sense displayed by the speakers. He had the highest opinion of the operative classes of the town, they had been peculiarly patient under all their sufferings, and it was a duty devolving upon those who were able to ameliorate their hard afflictions. The wealthy classes were not so much under the dominion of despotism as their poorer brethren ; for he had heard stories of an almost incredible nature respecting the doling out of parochial relief, as if poverty merited nothing but insult and injury. He had been told of a palpable robbery by a per centage—a tax, being laid upon the poor pensioners of the town. He had seen the correspondence on the subject, and knowing one to be true, he was the more induced to believe the other. If the rich did not form a Club, for the purposes which he had stated, he hoped that they would extend a helping hand to the mechanics, for he believed them to be active and efficient instruments in conquering local tyranny, which was rendered more galling through the baseness of the means by which it was inflicted upon them.

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THE Third Number of this work is now published. The title is "Advice to Young Men, and, *incidentally and with great diffidence*, to Young Women, in the middle and higher ranks of life." I have begun with the YOUTH, and shall go to the YOUNG MAN or the BACHELOR, talk the matter over with him as a LOVER, then consider him in the character of HUSBAND; then as FATHER; then as CITIZEN or SUBJECT; though if he will be ruled by me, he will, if he can, contrive to exist in the former of these two capacities. Such will be the nature of my work; or, rather, such will be the division of it. Each number will contain thirty pages of print; will be covered by a wrapper made of the CORN PAPER, which will have notices, advertisements, and the like, in the usual way. The work is intended to contain twelve Numbers, to be published on the first day of every month, and the price of each Number will be Sixpence. So that for six shillings, expended in one year of his life, I do believe that any Youth or Young Man may acquire that knowledge, which will enable him to pass the rest of his life with as little as possible of those troubles and inconveniences which arise from want of being warned of danger in time. At any rate, I, who have passed safely through as many dangers as any man that ever lived, will give my young countrymen the means of acquiring all the knowledge relative to these matters, which my experience has given me.

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Letter VI.—Of the Precautions to be observed while on board of Ship, whether in Cabin or Steerage.

Letter VII.—Of the first Steps to be taken on Landing.

Letter VIII.—Of the way to proceed to get a Farm, or a Shop, to settle in Business, or to set yourself down as an Independent Gentleman.

Letter IX.—On the means of Educating Children, and of obtaining literary Knowledge.

Letter X.—Of such other Matters, a knowledge relating to which must be useful to every one going from England to the United States.

It grieves me very much to know it to be my duty to publish this book; but I cannot refrain from doing it, when I see the alarms and hear the cries of thousands of virtuous families that it may save from utter ruin.

GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY.

THIS WORK has been delayed much longer than I expected, in consequence of the time consumed in getting the plates executed, of which the work will contain forty-three. In a few weeks I hope to have it ready for publication.

INDEXES.

GENTLEMEN who are in the habit of keeping the numbers of the Register for the purpose of having them bound up in volumes, must have observed that, for some time, I have published no *Indexes*, and that there are now four volumes wanting these, as well as *Title-pages* and tables of *Contents*. These are all now printed and ready for delivery. The whole four Indexes, with their respective Title-pages and tables of Contents, may be had *separately* for 3*d.* each, or *all stitched together* for 1*s.*; but, as it is impossible for me to know what number of readers I have who are so careful as to keep, and have bound up, the Register, I do not know what is likely to be the extent of the demand for these Indexes, and, therefore, to guard against any loss by over printing, a very limited number is struck off; and, lest it should be too small a number, the press will be kept standing for *a month*, from *Saturday the 25th of July*. Gentlemen residing in distant parts of the country, in Ireland, and in Scotland, will have ample time to order their indexes before the expiration of a month; and if any neglect to do it, it will be their own faults. I have always hitherto published these things in the *quarter-sheet* attached to the Register, causing no additional expense to my readers; but those readers are aware, that to suit the tastes of the Commissioners of Stamps, I was compelled, some time ago, to change the *form* of the Register, reduce it to a much smaller bulk, and altogether abandon the *quarter sheet*; and, in short, to make it so small that to publish indexes in it in future would be to occupy more room than I have to spare.

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